(c) Air India has taken serveral steps to increase their traffic such as restructuring the pattern of operations, introduction of low-season fares, special schemes such as free-companion offer for first/executive class passengers, attractive group travel schemes, improvement in on-time performance etc. Indian Airlines have also taken measures to improve their inflight, ground and passenger services to attract more traffic.

Harassment of Customers by SBI Branch

2919. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that customers of S.B.I. Chandni Chowk Branch and particularly sub-branch of Dariba Kalan, Delhi are being harassed by the bank management by causing inordinate delay in clearance of their cheques, not giving monthly/quarterly statement of accounts of transactions etc;

(b) whethr Government have received any compalints in this regard;

(c) whether it is a fact that the said branches have not been computerised so far despite heavy workload; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and by when the branches are likely to be computerised to meet the heavy workload?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) State Bank of India (SBI) have reported that there is no sub-office of their Chandni Chowk Branch at Dariba Kalan. They have further reported that nomally, cheques received for clearance at their Chandni Chowk Branch are credited to the accounts of the lodger on the day following the day of their deposit. According to SBI, the statements of accounts are also available by the first week of the month following the month to which they relate.

(b) One compalint was received in July, 1996 by the bank from one of their constituents of Chandni Chowk Branch relating to the collection of a cheque drawn on its Extension Counter by the branch. According to SBI, the matter was resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant.

(c) It is true that SBI's Chandni Chowk Branch has not been computerised so far. However, wherever necessary, Services of outside computer agencies are engaged to cope up with the load of work, to ensure good customer service.

(d) SBI is already in the process of gradually computerising its Branches. SBI's Chandni Chowk Branch is also likely to be computerised by 31.3.97.

Second Channel of Doordarshan at Bhubaneshwar Centre

2920. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state: (a) whether Government propose to start second channel of Doordarshan at Bhubaneshwar centre; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI CM. IBRAHIM): (a) and (b) A Low Power TV Transmitter (LPT) for relay of Metro Channel (DD-II) service is already functioning at Bhubaneshwar since 7.5.1994.

River Tourism in Andhra Pradesh

2921. SHRI YERRA NARAYANA-SWAMY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government will encourage the concept of "River Tourism" in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, what are the existing schemes to encourage use of River Godavari and River Krishna in Andhra Pradesh; and

(c) full details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) to (c) Department of Tourism, Government of India, prioritises and sanctions the projects on the basis of schemes received from the State Governments after discussion with the latter. Water Sports have been introduced on Krishna River at Paakasambarrage near Vijayawada. The Central Government has provided assistance for boats, launches and water sports equipments as per the proposals submitted by

the Government of Andhra Pradesh. The details are:—

1. Boats at Husainsagar, Ramappa and Pakhal Lake.
2. Water Sports and Nagarjuna Sagar, Rishikonda and Vijaywada.
3. Floating recreation'Deck at Hussain Sagar.
4. Launch for Nagarjunasagar.
5. Water Sports Equitpments.

Offer of Air France for global alliance with Air India

2922. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item appearing in the Times of India dated 11th August, 1996 under the caption of "Air France offers global pact to Air India"; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI CM. IBRAHIM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Preliminary discussions have been held between Air India and Air France on co-operative arrangements between the two airlines in their operations. No agreement has been reached in the matter so far.

Applications for Financial Assistance received by IDBI from Assam

2923. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications for grant of financial assistance received by the Industrial Development Bank of India from entrepreneurs of Assam during the last three years;

(b) the number of applications sanctioned and rejected during the above period; and

(c) the details of financial assistance disbursed by IDBI to industries in the state during the said period?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b)The number of applications received, sanctioned and rejected by the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) from entrepreneurs of Assam during the last three years is as under:—

Year	Applications Received	Applications Sanctioned	Applications Rejected
1993-94	14	10	3
1994-95	15	10	
1995-96	21	17	

IDBI has reported that incomplete applications and those in which the promoters did not furnish the requisite details were treated as closed. These applications would however be reopened by IDBI as and when the promoter furnish the requisite information.

(c) The details of assistance disbursed by IDBI to industries in Assam during 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96 are as under:—

(Rs. crores)

Year	Amount disbursed
1993-94	14.70
1994-95	22.53
1995-96	43.80

Present Level of NPA

2924. SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI:
SHRI SHIV CHARAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the present level of NPA (Non-Performing Assets) stand at 16.5% of the total adverses of banks;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that the cost of funding these NPAs is a major contributory factor for the tardy growth of banks;

(c) if so, what is the ideal level of NPA as per Reserve Bank of India guidelines; and

(d) what steps Government propose to take to bring it down to the ideal level?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (c) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have reported that they have not indicated any instructions to banks about the ideal level of Non-Performing Assets (NPAs). The banks are, however, being continuously exhorted to bring down the level of NPAs through upgradation, recovery etc.

(b) The introduction of prudential norms on Income Recognition, Asset classification and